



Southeastern Idaho News

BANNOCK, BEAR LAKE, BINGHAM, CARIBOU, FRANKLIN, ONEIDA & POWER COUNTIES

GOOD-BYE & WELCOME

Idaho Commerce & Labor bids farewell to Shelley Allen, who had served as the southeastern Idaho regional economist for the last 13 years. Allen is now the public information officer for the Chubbuck-Pocatello School District. We wish her well.

The department welcomes Scott Hobdey, who has been a tax representative in southeastern Idaho for the last 18 years, as the new regional economist.

Scott graduated from Gooding High School and attended Idaho State University for two years. After serving in the Army in Vietnam, he returned to Idaho State University to pursue a business degree. After graduating with a master's degree in business administration, Hobdey worked as a cost accountant for JR Simplot Co. and as assistant athletic director at Idaho State before joining Idaho Commerce & Labor.

We are excited to have him as part of the regional economist team. He is located in the Pocatello Commerce & Labor Office at 430 N. 5th Ave. He can be reached at (208) 236-6710 ext. 3713 or Scott.Hobdey@cl.idaho.gov. If you have any questions on the economy in southeastern Idaho, he's your man.

ECONOMIC TRENDS

The unemployment rate crept slightly higher in the Pocatello Metropolitan Statistical Area in August to 4.1 percent seasonally adjusted. The increase of two-tenths of a percentage point from July was due to a temporary one-week layoff at ConAgra's Lamb Weston plant in American Falls. The food processing plant shut down for maintenance work before it begins processing the 2006 potato crop. The short-term layoff was also responsible for a drop in the number of jobs in food manufacturing.

The area has experienced impressive job growth over the year. Nonfarm payrolls increased 3.6 percent, about 1,360

Southeastern Idaho Table 1: Pocatello MSA Labor Force & Employment Bannock and Power counties

	Aug 2006*	Jul 2006	Aug 2005	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
Seasonally Adjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	45,950	44,890	45,010	2.4	2.1
Unemployment	1,870	1,770	1,620	5.6	15.4
% of Labor Force Unemployed	4.1	3.9	3.6		
Total Employment	44,080	43,120	43,390	2.2	1.6
Unadjusted					
Civilian Labor Force	44,630	43,520	43,680	2.6	2.2
Unemployment	1,720	1,640	1,550	4.9	11.0
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.9	3.8	3.6		
Total Employment	42,910	41,880	42,130	2.5	1.9
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	39,140	38,960	37,780	0.5	3.6
Goods-Producing Industries	6,180	6,100	5,810	1.3	6.4
Natural Resources & Mining	30	30	30	0.0	0.0
Construction	2,770	2,720	2,420	1.8	14.5
Manufacturing	3,380	3,350	3,360	0.9	0.6
Food Manufacturing	650	1,020	940	-36.3	-30.9
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	140	140	140	0.0	0.0
Machinery Manufacturing	110	110	100	0.0	10.0
Other Manufacturing	2,480	2,080	2,180	19.2	13.8
Service-Providing Industries	32,960	32,860	31,970	0.3	3.1
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	7,650	7,630	7,360	0.3	3.9
Wholesale Trade	1,390	1,420	1,340	-2.1	3.7
Retail Trade	4,790	4,740	4,560	1.1	5.0
Utilities	50	50	50	0.0	0.0
Transportation & Warehousing	1,420	1,420	1,410	0.0	0.7
Information	770	770	750	0.0	2.7
Financial Activities	2,140	2,140	2,090	0.0	2.4
Professional & Business Services	5,090	5,000	4,740	1.8	7.4
Educational & Health Services	3,410	3,400	3,320	0.3	2.7
Leisure & Hospitality	3,460	3,460	3,550	0.0	-2.5
Other Services	1,210	1,230	1,220	-1.6	-0.8
Government Education	4,310	4,330	4,320	-0.5	-0.2
Government Administration	4,920	4,900	4,620	0.4	6.5

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

jobs. Most job growth has been in the service sector, but manufacturing has shown some modest gains. While government continues to lead industry employment at 9,230 workers, professional, business and health services — with more than 8,500 workers — have overtaken the trade and transportation industries as the second largest industry group. Trade and transportation together employ over 7,650 workers.

Southeastern Idaho Table 2 shows unemployment rates for the seven southeastern Idaho counties. All posted lower unemployment rates in August, and only Power County recorded a rate higher than a year ago. The August unemployment rate in Power County was 10.8 percent as a result of the temporary maintenance shutdown at Lamb Wes-

ton. This was the highest unemployment rate since 10.1 percent in May 2003, which was also the result of a temporary layoff at the food processing plant.

AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS

Bannock County

- Convergys, the fifth largest employer in Pocatello, added about 200 jobs in September as it geared up for an increase in callers with the start of the football season. Recent changes in the company's employment structure allow Convergys to add workers without needing more space. In the spring, Convergys began training home-based workers, and the first 100 were on the job in May after the 90-day training period. The company has capped the number of its home-based employees at 180.
- Researchers at the Idaho Accelerator Center in Pocatello are working on a Cold War relic – better known as a particle accelerator that emits pulses of electrons through a metal tube. The relic is part of a mothballed "Star Wars" missile defense system. Researchers want to develop quicker methods of scanning cargo at ports, imaging technology with 1,000 times greater contrast than currently available. They are also working on new ways to detect and neutralize airborne pathogens such as anthrax. Idaho State University is planning a gathering next spring for about 300 of the world's leading physicists, some representing the International Atomic Energy Agency, at the accelerator center.

Bingham and Power Counties

- Bingham County Chiropractic celebrated its new facility with an open house and ribbon cutting. Dr. Mike Johnson remodeled a very old, run down building in Blackfoot into a modern office.
- Jamie Warren and Nikki Riley recently opened the Conservatory of Ballet and Theatrical Arts in Blackfoot. The studio is located in the old section of the Father's House church. The ballet and acting studio has beautiful hardwood floors and stained glass window plus some mirrors, acting props and lighting, while the owners bring lots of experience.
- The Shelley City Council gave the high school a one-year conditional approval for chickens on school property. The agriculture class is going to give 100 poults various feed combinations and weigh them daily to determine the best feed, amount and schedule. The project will last two months until just before Thanksgiving — maybe several lucky residents will be the beneficiaries of poultry for the holiday season.
- Angelen and Gene Parrish opened the Shilling House Reception Center in late August. The Parrishes purchased the former Hawker Funeral Home building.

The couple decided to have an ecumenical blessing of the building after several people said they felt uncomfortable about the new use of the building. The Parrishes will use the building as a reception and event center, augmenting the Shilling House Restaurant and Reception Center on the north side of town. The building was purchased from Perry Hawker, who moved his funeral home to the former LDS Tabernacle. Angelen Parrish said she felt "it was too nice a building to let go to waste."

- A local Allstate Insurance agency was opened recently in Shelley with Jim and Cindy Hone as the owners and agents. Jim Hone is the licensed agent, and Cindy Hone runs the office. Two of the couple's children help out. The Hones also own KSRA, the radio station in Salmon.
- Gov. Jim Risch presented a \$31,000 check to Power and Bingham counties. The two counties joined forces through the Great Rift Business Development Organization and Bingham Economic Development Corp. to support existing businesses and promote economic development in the two counties. Power County will receive \$20,000 of the grant to help support an economic development specialist. The remaining \$11,000 will underwrite economic development activity in the Aberdeen area of southern Bingham County. Power County also presented a \$5,000 check to Great Rift to further collaborative economic development efforts through mid-2007.
- LaeDee's Lounge opened Sept. 2 in American Falls. Shena Schieman and Talaire Kent purchased the building, which formerly was the Horseshoe Bar, and began restoration in July. LaeDee's will have a wine room, Internet access, a full coffee/espresso bar, karaoke nights, live bands on occasion and even a men's night where men can benefit from lower-priced drinks.

Caribou County

- The demand for electricity in southeastern Idaho and northern Utah is expected to continue to grow for the next 20 years. In an effort to meet that demand, Rocky Mountain Power is proposing the construction of a new substation. The substation would tap into the Jim Bridger-Goshen 345,000-volt transmission line and convert the voltage for transmission on the 138,000-volt line that serves area customers. The proposed Threemile Knoll substation would be north of Soda Springs. It could be completed by December 2008. The project will help maintain safe, reliable delivery of electricity and increased operational flexibility, which helps keep the power rates lower for area customers. Rocky Mountain Power is working with Idaho Power and the Bon-

neville Power Administration because of the interconnected system of electrical transmission in the West.

- Great American Video in Soda Springs recently changed hands. Charles and Glenna Adams purchased the franchise from Dale Cahoon of Idaho Falls. The video store currently has three full-time employees and two part-timers. Great American Video will continue to offer both rentals and retail sales.
- Dr. Terry Sanderson recently announced that Dr. Jeff Collins is joining the team at Bear River Vision, which Sanderson founded in Soda Springs 30 years ago. Bear River Vision also serves Montpelier. With the addition of Collins, the Montpelier office will now be open two full days a week and a half-day two Fridays a month.
- The Sanders Furniture store recently celebrated its 70th year serving Caribou County and the surrounding area. In September 1936, Conrad Sanders purchased the Lund Store and began selling groceries, sundries, hardware, bib overalls, fencing nails and tailor-made suits. During World War II, it began to sell appliances. Conrad rented a small building in Bancroft and opened the first Sanders Furniture and Appliance Store. In 1946 the Grace store was opened

and then in 1958 the Soda Springs location opened. It remains today and is operated by Conrad's granddaughter, Linda. The Grace store closed in 1980 when Conrad died, and the Bancroft store closed in 1977 when Conrad's son, Neal, moved to Oregon. The current store now includes the store next door. Its name is "Sanders Furniture, Too."

- Agrium recently broke its old record of operating without time lost to injury. In August, the company marked its 978th day without lost time due to injury — the equivalent of 1,600,000 hours or 2 ½ years without an injury. The record earned Agrium CPO the Star site designation, the highest recognition in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Voluntary Protection Program. Agrium also donated a 36-foot by 60-foot building to the Soda Springs School District. The building was not being used. After news of the donation began to spread, other individuals helped move the building and set it up at reduced cost. The school district started the new school year with much needed additional space, saving well over \$150,000 because of the donation.

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